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ABSTRACT

The 413 members of the North American Association of Summer Sessions were surveyed to determine programming for college summer sessions in the 1980's. Summer session directors were asked about who the students of the 1980's would be, what programs should be developed, where programs should be held, and what time frames for course offerings would be significant. Survey responses indicated that programs designed for the adult learner and the part-time student would be important, and that college credit for career education, either before the student enters college or as part of the formal education, would be significant. Because of the concern about energy, higher education institutions will be taking their courses to the students rather than vice versa, and because of the declining student population, colleges will be offering courses in time patterns that will be convenient for the student. The survey questionnaire provided insight into the kind of programming appropriate for specific kinds of institutions by placing demographic information regarding the institution in the computer, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Four types of institutions emerged with specific patterns of programming for the 1980's: smaller institutions (student body of under 1,000 per academic year), residential colleges, larger institutions (student body greater than 15,000 per academic year), and the commuter institutions. Programming expectations for each type are noted. (SW)

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PROGRAMMING FOR SUMMER SESSIONS IN THE 1980's

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General trends in programming for the summer sessions in the 1980's emerge from a survey of the North American Association of Summer Sessions membership. Programs designed for the adult learner and the part-time student will be important; college credit for career education, either before the student enters college or as part of his formal education will be significant. Because of the concern about energy, higher education institutions will be taking their courses to the students rather than vice versa, and in an era of a declining student population, colleges will be offering courses in time patterns which will be convenient for the student, the consumer of education in the 1980's. In addition to these general trends, specific types of colleges and universities will be more successful with certain types of programs in the 1980's according to the survey of NAASS members.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To plan academic programs to meet the needs of students in institutions of higher education in the 1980's, the 413 members of the North American Association of Summer Sessions were surveyed during the summer of 1979. The survey sent by mail covered the four basic questions of inquiry - who, what, where, and when - regarding the planning of programs for the 1980's. First, summer session directors were asked who would be the audience for summer programming in the 1980's. They were asked to rate each of the following groups as very important, important, or not important in planning for the 1980's: adult learner, part-time students, returning women, 18-22-year-old students, senior citizens, minorities, handicapped students, and foreign students. Secondly they were asked what programs should be developed for the students in the 1980's. They were asked to indicate whether or not each of the following areas was significant or insignificant for program development in the 1980's. The areas were: cooperative education programs with agencies and businesses, internships in credit programs, programs involving assessment of prior learning, alumni colleges, and elderhostels. The third area of inquiry regarded where programs in the 1980's should be held. The choices were: off-campus courses at places of employment, off-campus courses at convenient locations for students such as shopping centers, television courses, courses involving travel within the region or the state where the college is located, foreign travel courses, and newspaper courses. Respondents to the

questionnaire were asked to indicate if each of these locations would be significant or insignificant for program development in the 1980's. The fourth general question was what time frame would be significant for programs in the summers of the 1980's. Summer session directors were to rank order their preferences from the following choices: evening sessions, intensive sessions concentrating on one short time period such as the Colorado Block Plan, five-week session, four days per week sessions rather than five days to aid commuters, four-week session, courses scheduled at the convenience of students and not conforming to the parameters of a given session, and eight-week sessions. Demographic data on the colleges and universities was also requested.

THE AUDIENCE OF THE 1980's

Who will be the students of the 1980's? The survey of summer session directors - with the return rate of 44% - indicates that the summer school audience in the 1980's will include a large number of part-time students and adult learners, two groups of students which will be playing an increasing role in the academic year student population too. That the adult learner will be very important in the summer programs of the 1980's was indicated by 82% of the summer session directors surveyed, and the part-time student audience was sited as very important by 72% of the directors. By contrast, two groups were also frequently listed as not important. Forty percent of those surveyed saw foreign students as not important in summer programming during the 1980's; 30% saw handicapped students as not important.

PROGRAMS FOR THE 1980's

Programs stressing practicality, the student's ability to obtain a job upon graduation, emerged as the most significant ones in the eyes of summer session directors. For 90% of the summer session directors, coop education programs with agencies and businesses were seen as a significant area of program development for the 1980's. Internships involving credit programs were rated as significant by 85% of those surveyed. In keeping with the significance of the adult learner and the part-time student, programming for these groups was seen as important. Specifically programs involving assessment of prior learning rated high with summer session directors; 67% of them indicated that these programs would be significant in the 1980's.

OFF-CAMPUS COURSES FOR THE 1980's

Where should courses be offered in the 1980's? They should be offered at locations convenient for the students. Eighty-three percent of the respondents indicated that courses taught where the student is employed would be significant in the 1980's. In the same vein, 66% indicated that off-campus locations which would be convenient for students such as shopping centers would be important course locations for the 1980's. What role television will play in education during the 1980's is unclear. Fifty percent of the summer session directors indicate that television programs will be a significant area of instruction in the 1980's and 50% see television as an insignificant means of instruction.

While taking courses to students in the 1980's will be popular, taking students to places of instruction will be less popular, according to the summer session directors surveyed. For example, 52% indicated that courses involving travel within the region or within the state would be insignificant in the 1980's and 54% indicated that courses involving foreign travel would be insignificant in the 1980's. Even though newspaper courses would not require travel on the part of the students, they were seen as insignificant by 70% of the summer session directors. Using the media - the newspaper or television - for instruction will not be popular in the '80's; instead courses involving the interaction of students with teachers appear to be the significant means of instruction.

TIME PATTERNS FOR THE '80's

To meet the needs of adult learners and part-time students, evening sessions were seen as a popular time period in the 1980's. When ranking preferred time patterns for summer sessions, the evening session was among the top three choices for 62% of the summer session directors. Another popular time period indicating the need for short sessions was an intensive session involving concentration on one subject matter for a short period of time, such a plan is the Colorado Block Plan. A trend toward short summer sessions is also reflected in the directors rating of the five-week session and their rating of the eight-week session. Fifty-one percent see the five-week session as being significant for summer programming in the 1980's while only 26% see an eight-week session as significant. While

directors appear to prefer short sessions, they are unwilling to condense learning to the even shorter four-week session; only 41% see this session as being significant in the 1980's as compared to 51% for the five-week session. The concern about meeting the needs of students is again reflected in the time pattern seen as significant in the 1980's. To aid commuting students, 51% of the directors see four days per week sessions as being significant in the 1980's rather than the traditional five days per week sessions. Through evening sessions, intensive sessions, or shortened weekly sessions, directors will be offering a variety of time patterns to meet the needs of students and to attract them to campus in summers.

In addition to providing answers to the who, what, where, and when of summer session programming in the 1980's, the questionnaire distributed to summer session directors also provided insight into the kind of programming appropriate for specific kinds of institutions. By placing the demographic information regarding the institutions in the computer, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, and doing cross-tabulations, the questionnaire data revealed the types of programs, places, people, and times which would be significant for specific types of institutions in the 1980's. Conclusions about programming for the 1980's are based upon data with the statistical significance of .05 or less.

RESIDENTIAL CAMPUSES AND SENIOR CITIZENS

When considering who will be attracted to specific types of institutions of higher education, two patterns emerge. First senior citizens, according to summer session directors, will be a very important group on residential campuses in the 1980's. Thirty-nine percent of the directors on residential campuses saw senior citizens as a very important group for program development in the 1980's; 25% of the directors on campuses which had both, residential facilities and commuter programs, listed senior citizens as very important while only 6% of the commuter institutions indicated that senior citizens would be a very important population group for summers in the 1980's. That senior citizens will be an important population group on residential campuses was also borne out by the popularity of the elderhostel program at schools located in rural areas and in small towns - both locations most often have residential colleges or universities.

In 69% of the rural schools and in 65% of the institutions located in small towns, elderhostels were viewed as significant programs for the 1980's. By contrast, 63% of the inner-city institutions and 57% of the suburban institutions considered elderhostels as insignificant for the 1980's.

A second population group which becomes significant only at certain types of higher education institutions is the minority student. In very small schools, schools with an academic year population under a thousand, the minority student is seen as very important in the 1980's. He will also be very important at middle size schools; those with academic year populations between 5,000 to 15,000 students. However, at large schools, those with an academic year population over 15,000, the minority student is unimportant when considering program development.

SMALL SCHOCLS TRY NEW PROGRAMS

While the "who" of programming for the 1980's varies with the type of institution, the kind of program which should be offered also varies with the type of school. Three types of programs were more popular on specific types of campuses. First prior learning programs were most important in the smaller schools. In the small schools, those under one-thousand students during the academic year, 90% of the summer session directors saw prior learning programs as significant for the 1980's at their institutions. Institutions with larger academic year student bodies, also saw prior learning programs as important but as the size of the institution increased their interest in prior learning decreased. Schools with populations under 10,000 showed a high interest in prior learning; 70% or more of the summer session directors in these institutions saw prior learning programs as significant in the 1980's. By contrast, in schools with academic year populations over 15,000, 53% of the summer session directors saw prior learning programs as significant in the 1980's.

A second area in which smaller institutions expressed the most interest, was internships involving credit programs. Institutions with an academic year population under 1,000 - all of them - saw internships as significant for program development in the 1980's. Again as the size of the institution increased the interest in internships decreased. For institutions with a population under 5,000 but over 1,000, 93% of the summer session directors were interested in internships. For institutions with a student population, under 10,000 but over

5,000, 77% of the summer session directors were interested in internships. Whether it be internships or prior learning programs, the smaller institutions of higher education are more interested in moving into new areas of program development involving the world of work as the 1980's approach.

The third program which appeared to be significant on only a specific type of campus was the alumni program. Seventy-two percent of the summer session directors on residential campuses saw alumni programs as significant in the 1980's. By contrast 58% of the commuter institutions saw alumni programs as insignificant. Thus residential campuses express interest in not only alumni programs but senior citizen programs as they enter the 1980's.

FOREIGN TRAVEL PROGRAMS SIGNIFICANT

When considering location of summer session programs in the 1980's directors did not express an interest, in general, in foreign travel. However at institutions located in rural areas or in small towns - rural areas being defined as ones with local populations under 6,000 and small towns defined as areas with populations between 6,001 and 50,000 - foreign travel programs will be significant in the 1980's. Fifty-six percent of the summer session directors at rural institutions see foreign travel programs as significant in the 1980's, and 59% of the directors at institutions located in small towns consider these programs to be important. By contrast, 65% of the directors of inner-city institutions see foreign travel programs as insignificant in the 1980's and 64% of the suburban directors agree with them.

Using the media to carry instruction to students rather than have students come to campus will be significant only at certain types of institutions. Television courses will be significant at middle-size schools, schools with populations between 5,000 and 15,000 students during the academic year. Sixty-eight percent of the summer session directors at schools with academic year populations between 5,000 and 10,000 see television as a significant vehicle for instruction and 57% of the directors at institutions with populations between 10,000 and 15,000 agree. The small schools and large schools disagree. Eighty-eight percent of the directors at institutions with under 1,000 students during the academic year consider television instruction to be insignificant in the 1980's and 54% of the directors at

institutions with populations over 15,000 agree with them.

As might be expected, newspaper courses were a significant program only at commuter institutions. This means of taking the course to the student rather than having the student come to campus, was seen as significant at 35% of the commuter institutions and only 17% of the residential institutions.

SESSION LENGTH VARIES WITH SIZE

When considering time patterns for summer sessions in the 1980's, again the preferable time pattern varies according to the type of institution. The size of the academic year student body and the length of summer sessions are related. Short summer sessions are most popular in smaller schools; the four-week summer session was most popular in schools with an academic year student body under one-thousand. On the survey, summer session directors rank ordered their preferred time pattern for summer sessions. Twenty-two percent of the summer session directors at schools with an academic year student body of under one-thousand students selected the four week session as their top priority. Seventeen percent of the directors at institutions with under 5,000 students during the academic year agreed with them. At larger institutions there either was no interest or only 3% of the directors who expressed an interest in the four-week session as the top priority for summer programming.

By contrast the eight-week session, the longest choice for a summer session, was most popular at large schools. This session was rated as the highest priority by 24% of the summer session directors with summer populations over 2,500 students. That long summer sessions are most popular at larger institutions is also indicated by the response of the small institutions. Institutions with an academic year population under a thousand in 33% of the cases ranked the eight-week session as their lowest priority, schools under 5,000 in 43% of the cases ranked the eight-week session as the lowest priority, academic year populations under 10,000 saw the session as the lowest priority in 38% of the cases, and institutions in the 10,000 to 15,000 student population range ranked it lowest in 47% of the cases.

The second conclusion regarding time in the summer sessions involved evening sessions. At 20% of the commuter institutions the evening session was ranked as the top priority. The importance of evening sessions to commuter institutions

the evening session was ranked as the top priority. The importance of evening sessions to commuter institutions was also borne out by the fact that at institutions which have both residential and commuter programs 26% of these Summer Sessions directors ranked the evening session as their top priority. By contrast only 12% of the Summer Session directors at residential institutions ranked it as a top priority.

SUMMARY FOR SPECIFIC INSTITUTIONS

In reviewing the data regarding specific types of higher education institutions, four types of institutions emerged with specific patterns of programming for the 1980's. First at smaller institutions - those with an academic year student body of under a thousand students - a great deal of flexibility and innovation related to career education was evident. Smaller institutions were interested in prior learning experiences which are relatively new to higher education. They were exploring the possibility of offering credit programs through internships. They were more interested than other institutions in the four-week summer session rather than the more traditional eight-week session. They expressed interest in developing programming to meet the needs of minority students and they did not see the media, specifically television, as an appropriate means of instruction for their students. In an effort to survive the 1980's, the smaller institutions are becoming adaptive.

A second type of institution - residential colleges - also will be stressing specific types of programs as they enter the 1980's. Senior citizens and alumni will be most welcome on these campuses. The residential setting will provide an opportunity to combine learning with vacations in a self-contained unit.

As larger institutions of higher education - those with an academic year student body greater than 15,000 students - enter the 1980's, they evidence less interest in exploring new areas of programming. They prefer the traditional eight-week Summer Session; they are less concerned about prior learning programs; they are less concerned about internships. Large institutions see less need to adapt as they enter the 1980's.

The fourth type of institution, the commuter institution, evidenced two trends in summer programming. Newspaper courses were most popular on this campus, and evening sessions rated highest on this type of campus.

On all types of campuses as the 1980's begin, Summer Session directors will, as they have in the past, analyze their student body and try to meet their needs. To do so, they will look at new programs, new time periods, and new places of instruction.